

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, GB

SUBJECT: SOGAFFERRO

REF: LIBREVILLE 572

1. DISCUSSIONS WITH UNION CARBIDE AND U.S. STEEL LEAD TO CONCLUSION SOGAFFERRO FERRO-ALLOY PLANT HIGHLY TENTATIVE PROJECT FOR WHICH MEMBER FIRMS LIKELY MAKE OWN ARRANGEMENTS DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION IF AND WHEN DECISION TO GO AHEAD IS MADE.

2. UNION CARBIDE ADVISES PRESENT MANDATE SOGAFFERRO IS SOLELY TO EXPLORE FEASIBILITY PRODUCING FERRO-MANGANESE IN GABON. SOGAFFERRO HAS RETAINED INDIVIDUAL FRENCHMAN TO INVESTIGATE SUCH FEASIBILITY. HE MAY DO STUDY HIMSELF OR RECOMMEND A FIRM BE RETAINED THIS PURPOSE. CITING PRESENT SOGAFFERRO MANDATE LIMITATIONS, CURRENT EXPLORATORY ARRANGEMENT AND HIGHLY TENTATIVE NATURE ANY FERRO-ALLOY PRODUCTION PLANS FOR GABON, UNION CARBIDE CONTACT FEELS USG SHOULD REFRAIN APPROACHING DESIGN/CONSTRUCTORS UNTIL SOGAFFERRO AND GOG PLANS BECOME MORE DEFINITIVE.

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3. U.S. STEEL CONTACT GAVE SIMILAR APPRAISAL HIGHLY TENTATIVE NATURE OF PROJECT. FYI: HE ADDED THAT PARTICIPATION UNION CARBIDE AND EUROPEAN FIRMS IN

SOGAFERRO EQUITY REFLECTS COMILOG/U.S. STEEL INITIATIVE TO HELP ASSURE MARKET SHOULD DECISION BE MADE TO BUILD FERRO-ALLOY PLANT. SOGAFERRO UNLIKELY MAKE ANY POSITIVE DECISIONS RE PLANT UNTIL FIRST TWO SECTIONS TRANSGABON RAILROAD COMPLETED AND GRAND POUBARA DAM UNDERWAY. (END FYI)

4. PARAS 2-3, ABOVE, APPEAR CONFIRM MUCH OF REFTTEL INFO. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT UNION CARBIDE PREFERENCES, PLUS STRONG IN HOUSE CAPABILITIES AND WIDESPREAD CONTACTS SOGAFERRO SHAREHOLDERS RE DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION FERRO-ALLOY PLANTS, USG APPROACHES TO PROSPECTIVE U.S. BIDDERS WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT APPEAR ADVISEABLE AT THIS TIME. RATHER, EMBASSY SHOULD CONTINUE FOLLOW SITUATION CLOSELY, REPORTING ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS. AT THIS END, COMMERCE WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH UNION CARBIDE AND U.S. STEEL, BOTH OF WHICH HAVE AGREED NOTIFY COMMERCE SHOULD DEVELOPMENTS WARRANT USG INVOLVEMENT.

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